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Reagan Issues New Rules on Classified Documents

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 2 — President Reagan, moving again to curb disclosures of sensitive foreign policy material, today imposed new regulations on the handling of National Security Council documents containing classified information.

At the same time, the President rejected a proposed restriction on contacts between Government officials and reporters.

Mr. Reagan's action came in the form of a newly issued "implementation order" from William P. Clark, the national security adviser, who has been in charge of the recent White House drive against the unauthorized disclosure of classified material.

David R. Gergen, the senior White House spokesman, said Mr. Clark's directive was "drawn up after careful consideration and consultation, and it draws a proper balance between the public's legitimate right to know and the Government's need to protect classified information."

Objections to 'Working Draft'

In an order issued by the President on Jan. 12, Government officials were required to obtain prior approval from superiors before any interviews with reporters on the subject of classified information taken up by the National Security Council. A "working draft" of Mr. Clark's new order would have continued this provision and added another provision requiring officials to file memorandums based on their conversations with reporters.

Some provisions of the working draft were shown Monday to reporters, who raised objections to it. They have recently told White House officials that Mr. Reagan's campaign against unauthorized disclosures was hampering the

flow of nonclassified, as well as classified, information to the news media.

Mr. Gergen said that Mr. Clark's new order "rescinds" the previous one regarding contacts with the news media. However, he and other White House officials said that different agencies would be given some latitude in placing restrictions on contacts with the press and in curbing the dissemination of classified material.

Under Mr. Clark's new directive, everyone given access to documents used by the National Security Council will be required to sign a cover sheet, signifying their agreement to discuss the contents only with "persons who are authorized by law to have access to this document."

Maj. Robert M. Kimmitt, legal counsel to the National Security Council, said that information might be classified if it met all three of the following criteria: if the person classifying it has the authority to do so, if it contains certain categories of sensitive information, such as military information, and if its disclosure might do "identifiable damage to the national security interests of the United States."

Major Kimmitt said that Attorney General William French Smith was reviewing the three-year-old regulations on the implementation of these classification criteria.

In interviews, officials of the Administration cited three recent developments that precipitated the President's crackdown on unauthorized disclosure of sensitive material.

First, these officials said, was the dis-

closure last month of Mr. Reagan's decision to permit Taiwan to buy some 500 personic fighters but not a more advanced fighter, known as the FX. The Chinese, who oppose American arms sales to Taiwan, were said to have been very upset when they read about this decision in the newspapers.

Second, one official said, was a report in The Washington Post of the possible presence of Mig-23 fighter bombers packed in crates in Cuba. After the article was published, the official said, the crates disappeared under camouflage.

Finally, the official said some American "foreign intelligence friends" were signaling the Administration that they were having second thoughts about certain reciprocal intelligence agreements because of the unauthorized disclosures.